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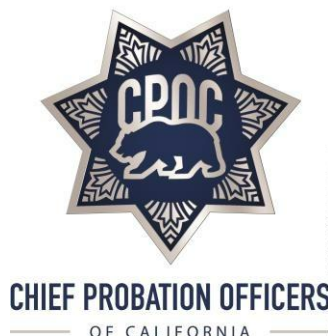
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June 21, 2019

The Honorable Holly Mitchell
California State Senate
State Capitol Building
Sacramento, CA 95814

Subject: Senate Bill 716 –Oppose Unless Amended

Dear Senator Mitchell:

On behalf of the Chief Probation Officers of California (CPOC), we regretfully write in opposition to Senate Bill 716 as written, which would require a county probation department to offer postsecondary courses to juveniles with a high school diploma or California high school equivalency certificate who are detained in a county juvenile facility.

We share your focus on fostering and enhancing postsecondary and vocational opportunities for youth in county juvenile facilities. We also appreciate the dialogue with your office and the sponsors over the last few months to discuss areas of concern and potential amendments.

While we recognize amendments taken that seek to address some of our concerns, we remain concerned with the mandate component of the bill as there are many considerations relative to offering postsecondary courses in a juvenile facility. Because courses run largely on semester systems, the start dates for courses, even expedited or shorter classes, may not align with the timing in which a youth is in our care and eligible to participate based on receiving their high school diploma or equivalency. Further, there are unfunded costs associated with providing for online courses as well as ensuring all facilities have the infrastructure, staffing, and other requirements to meet the needs of the youth taking the course as well as the other youth in our care. Lastly, the average length of stay in juvenile halls is less than 30 days and many times only a few days. Given this, it can be challenging to line up an available start of a course with the timing in which a youth is in our care in addition to serving the often-times critical and immediate needs of youth who come into our facilities.

Working within the spirit and intent of the bill, we have proposed an approach which would instead require probation to work in concert with the youth, to develop a postsecondary and vocational plan with identified actions and strategies for educational opportunities both within the facility and upon release to ensure we develop a plan that recognizes the abovementioned factors while working toward facilitating these opportunities for our youth. We look forward to further conversations on this approach.

We look forward to engaging in continued discussions with you on this important issue, but for reasons stated above we must oppose SB 716 as currently written.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Danielle Sanchez". The script is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Danielle" and last name "Sanchez" written in a single continuous line.

Danielle Sanchez
Legislative Director

cc: Members and Staff of the Assembly Higher Education Committee